

# Landscapes of Promise and Betrayal: Reclamation, Homesteading, and Japanese American Incarceration

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The reclamation of arid lands in the Western United States is a key topic studied by scholars of the region. The incarceration of Japanese Americans during World War II occupies a place of similar prominence among those studying Asian American history. Yet neither group has carefully examined the relationship between federal reclamation and incarceration. Three of the ten concentration camps were built on U.S. Bureau of Reclamation irrigation projects, which the agency developed as agrarian landscapes for white settlers. This article examines the Klamath Basin, home to one of the first federal irrigation projects and the site of the Tule Lake War Relocation Center, the largest concentration camp built during the war. The construction of the camp and the incarceration of Japanese Americans disrupted preexisting and largely unexamined notions of the irrigated landscape as a white space. After the war, locals used the physical remnants of the camps to continue developing a white agricultural landscape. This study raises questions about who benefited from state-directed land transformations in the West, whom the nation decided to honor after the war, and how these preferences were etched into the landscape. This article will also hopefully encourage geographers to extend perspectives from environmental history and race and landscape studies to examine pivotal events in American history. *Key Words: homesteading, incarceration, Japanese Americans, landscape, whiteness.*

美国西部干旱地区的填海工程是该地区学者研究的一个重要话题。美籍日本人在二战期间被囚禁的史实对于研究亚裔美国人历史的学者具有类似的重要性。然而，上述两组研究人员并没有仔细研究过联邦填海工程和美籍日裔被囚禁之间的关系。十个集中营之中的三个是为美国垦务局的灌溉项目而建立的，该机构是为白人定居者开发农业景观的。本文考察了克拉马斯盆地，这里是第一个联邦灌溉项目的所在地，同时也是战时图莱湖搬迁中心所在地，该中心是战争期间建成的最大集中营。该营地的建设和对日裔美国人的关押破坏了此前存在的、基本上是未经核对的认为灌溉景观是白种人地区特色的看法。战争结束后，当地人使用了难民营里的残余物质，继续发展白人农业景观。这项研究提出了一些相关问题：谁从国家主导的西部地区土地转换项目中受益，战争结束后国家决定纪念谁，以及这些倾向是如何被嵌刻到景观上的。本文也期望能够鼓励地理学家开拓环境历史的视野，延展种族和景观的研究，从而审视美国历史的这些关键事件。*关键词：建造家园，监禁，日裔美国人，景观，种族白度。*

La reclamación de tierras áridas de los Estados Unidos occidentales es un tema clave que estudian los eruditos de la región. El encarcelamiento de los americanos de origen japonés durante la Segunda Guerra Mundial ocupa lugar de similar prominencia entre quienes de ocupan de estudiar la historia asiático-americana. Con todo, ninguno de los dos grupos ha examinado con cuidado suficiente la relación entre la reclamación federal de tierras y el encarcelamiento. Tres de los diez campos de concentración se construyeron dentro del área de proyectos de irrigación de la Oficina de Reclamación de los EE.UU., que esta agencia desarrolló como paisajes agrarios destinados a pobladores blancos. Este artículo examina la Cuenca del Klamath, asiento de uno de los primeros proyectos federales de irrigación y sitio del Centro de Relocalización de Guerra del Lago Tule, el campo de concentración más grande construido durante la guerra. La construcción del campo y el encarcelamiento de los americanos japoneses trastornaron las nociones preexistentes, y en gran medida sin examinar, del paisaje irrigado como un espacio para blancos. Después de la guerra, los actores locales utilizaron los restos físicos del campo para seguir adelante con el proyecto de un paisaje agrícola blanco. Este estudio aboca interrogantes sobre quiénes se beneficiaron de las transformaciones de tierra hechas bajo dirección estatal en el Oeste, a quién decidió honrar la nación después de la guerra y cómo quedaron grabadas estas preferencias en el paisaje. Se espera que el artículo también estimule a los geógrafos a proyectar las perspectivas de la historia ambiental y los estudios de raza y paisaje en el examen de cruciales eventos de la historia americana. *Palabras clave: asentamiento, encarcelamiento, americanos japoneses, paisaje, blancura.*

The photograph shows a couple standing on a sage-covered bluff overlooking a gridded landscape of fields dotted by buildings (Figure 1). The man smiles as he gazes into the distance and points his outstretched arm to the north. His wife stands beside him looking out at the fields of wheat and barley that appear to beckon them into the future. The two seem oddly dressed given their surroundings: The man wears a suit and tie, the woman an overcoat. She clutches a leather purse with her white-gloved hand. Unlike the man, she seems anxious about what she sees.

The man had good reason to be happy. Earlier in the day Robert Metz was chosen as one of eighty-six winners of a homestead on the Bureau of Reclamation Klamath Project along the Oregon–California border. The homestead drawing was a much-anticipated event. A year earlier, World War II had ended, and it only seemed fitting that a grateful nation would offer land to the brave men who helped win the war against Japan, Italy, and Germany. More than 2,000 war veterans applied for the land opening on the Klamath Project in the fall of 1946. On 18 December, before a crowd of

hundreds, a project homesteader and World War I veteran pulled the winning names from a pickle jar in the nearby town of Klamath Falls during a public drawing in the city's armory. People elsewhere in the United States listened to the nationally broadcast drawing. The crowd waited with anticipation as the officials selected each winner. After the drawing, photographers for the Bureau of Reclamation took some of the winners to the top of The Peninsula, a bluff at the southern end of the Tule Lake basin near the site of the homesteads (Cassmore 1947a, 1947b; Williamson 1947; Turner 2002).

Behind Mr. and Mrs. Metz, out of the photograph frame, was another view of the Klamath Basin landscape, one less likely to inspire feelings of hope and promise. Just to the east, at the base of The Peninsula, lay the remnants of the Tule Lake War Relocation Center, the largest of ten camps where the federal government incarcerated Japanese Americans (Figure 2). For three years, thousands of Japanese Americans were held against their will in one of the most egregious civil rights violations in American history. The government



**Figure 1.** Mr. and Mrs. Robert Mertz, homestead winners, overlooking the Tule Lake section of the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation Klamath Project from the Peninsula, December 1946. (Courtesy: U.S. Bureau of Reclamation, Klamath Project Headquarters)



**Figure 2.** Panorama of the Tule Lake incarceration camp from The Peninsula, July 1946, about four months after it was closed by the War Relocation Authority. (Courtesy: U.S. Bureau of Reclamation, Klamath Project Headquarters)

closed the camp in March 1946, but the buildings remained standing at the time of the homestead drawing later that year.

Few Japanese Americans applied for homesteads, even though many were experienced farmers and some had served in the armed forces. Indeed, no person of Japanese ancestry (or Mexican ancestry for that matter) had ever been awarded a homestead on the Klamath Project since the U.S. federal government established it forty years earlier. The Klamath Project was a deeply racialized landscape constructed by and for white settlers.<sup>1</sup> With the help of the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation, settlers attempted to create what historian Mark Fiege (1999) called an *irrigated Eden*: a pastoral landscape of small fields nourished by irrigation water. Through hard work and the support of a willing federal government, the settlers had developed a landscape where white settlers could prosper.

Three of the ten camps were built on U.S. Bureau of Reclamation projects. In addition to the Tule Lake camp, the War Relocation Authority (WRA) built relocation centers on other federal irrigation projects: the Heart Mountain camp on the Shoshone Project in Wyoming and the Minidoka camp on the project of the same name in Idaho. Most of the other camps were constructed on federal land in the West.<sup>2</sup> Japanese incarceration was a federal endeavor and, as such, the WRA, the agency in charge of the program, took advantage of the geography of federal lands in the West to develop its incarceration system. The fact that three

of the camps were built on Bureau of Reclamation irrigation projects is particularly relevant given that the WRA looked at more than one hundred sites before choosing the camp locations (Eisenhower 1974).

This article explores why such sites were attractive to the federal government for incarcerating Japanese Americans, but even more important, it addresses how local communities reacted to the camps and how the facilities disrupted prevailing notions of the region as a white landscape. I focus on the relationship between federal reclamation and Japanese American incarceration in the upper Klamath Basin on the border of Oregon and California (Figure 3). Although the WRA built camps on two other Bureau of Reclamation irrigation projects, the basin differs from these other locations in that it was the site of one of the earliest federal reclamation projects as well as the largest camp incarcerating Japanese Americans. In the 1940s, the basin was a patchwork landscape composed, among other things, of numerous types of federal lands. The growth and modern history of the basin are inextricably linked to the Klamath Project. This study will hopefully encourage other geographers to extend the perspectives of environmental history and critical studies of landscape and race to pivotal events in American history. Geography offers novel and indispensable perspectives, even on seemingly well-studied topics such as incarceration and federal reclamation.

Among scholars of Japanese Americans, there is disagreement about what to call the camps where

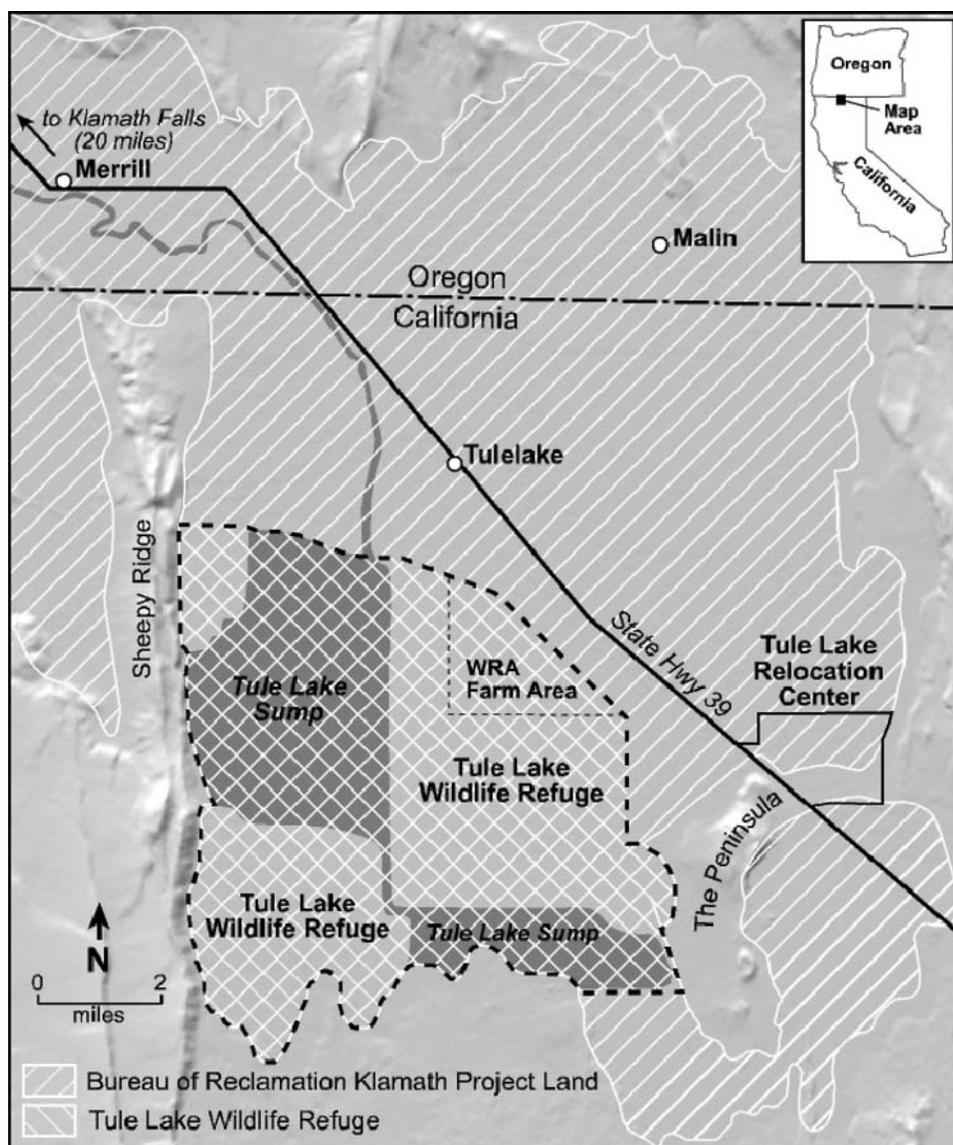


Figure 3. Map of the Tule Lake section, Klamath Project. (Courtesy: Joe Stoll, Syracuse University Department of Geography cartographer)

the government confined the internees (Daniels 2005; Ishizuka 2006). During the war, the official term was *relocation centers*, but this was a euphemism that glossed over the fact that centers held mostly American citizens who were compelled by the U.S. military to leave their homes and who were detained behind barbed wire. Some scholars argue that the centers should be called *concentration camps*. They correctly note that during the war some journalists, state and federal government officials, and even President Franklin D. Roosevelt occasionally called the sites by this term. Since then, of course, the words concentration camp conjure up images of Nazi death camps. Among the public today, the Japanese American confinement sites are more com-

monly called *internment* or *incarceration camps*. In this article, I avoid the term relocation centers unless referring to what a specific camp was called at the time of its operation. When referring to the confinement sites in general, I use either concentration camps or incarceration camps, with the realization that both terms have potential problems.

Although this article examines the sites where the WRA built and managed camps, it is not primarily about the Japanese Americans incarcerated there.<sup>3</sup> Rather, I focus on the basin and the surrounding agricultural landscape to illuminate this key topic in the historical geography of the United States. Despite the considerable literature on Japanese American

incarceration, relatively few authors carefully examine the places where the camps were built. The camps are treated largely as self-contained bubbles, and the history of the landscapes where they were built, before or after the war, is not addressed.<sup>4</sup> This is a notable omission. In places such as the Klamath Basin, the federal government had spent the preceding three decades constructing an agricultural landscape of small, owner-occupied, irrigated farms. The federal government continued this practice after the war and in the process erased much of the physical remnants of incarceration as local whites used these structures to construct homesteads.

The development of irrigated homesteads in the Klamath Basin was a racial project in which the federal government constructed an agrarian landscape for white settlers. Many scholars have studied the environmental aspects of reclamation but the racial dimensions less so. Incarcerating Japanese Americans was also an environmental project. Camp locations were selected for their agricultural potential and their preexisting irrigation infrastructure as much as they were for military concerns. During the war and the years immediately afterward, the racial and environmental dimensions of homesteading and incarceration came starkly into view. Both homesteading and incarceration were federally directed efforts to construct landscapes in the Western United States, and by studying homesteading and incarceration together, we can better understand the racial and environmental dimensions that informed both projects.

The literature from the environmental history of reclamation in the American West and the burgeoning field of race and landscape studies can illuminate this topic, although scholars from neither field have closely studied Japanese American incarceration or the sites where the camps were built.<sup>5</sup> In particular, I focus on how the federal government facilitated the development of a white landscape and how the construction of the camp brought to the surface preconceived notions about the proper racial character of the region. In this sense, the Klamath Basin was a normative landscape where notions of whiteness were largely taken for granted until the construction of the camp and the arrival of Japanese American internees.

This study contributes to the literature on race and landscape in a number of ways. First, much of the literature on race and landscape in geography focuses on black–white relations and, to a lesser degree, Latinos. Also, a large proportion of this research about the United States focuses on the U.S. South (Winders

2003; Schein 2006a).<sup>6</sup> Second, most of these studies address how the commemoration of events or people in the landscape is contested through the prism of race. Some deal with the everyday processes of creating racialized landscapes. Few focus on state-led efforts to create racialized places, whether explicitly or implicitly. This study shows what happened when two state-directed programs to construct racialized landscapes—one to create a white agrarian landscape, the other to incarcerate Japanese Americans in camps—were carried out in the intermountain West.

## Reclamation and Incarceration

The story of irrigation and the role of the federal government in “reclaiming” arid lands is a well-studied topic among historians of the Western United States (Pisani 1984, 1992, 2002, 2003; Worster 1985; Reisner 1986; Fiege 1999; Langston 2003). Within Asian American history, the history of Japanese incarceration during World War II occupies a similarly prominent role (Report of the Commission on Wartime Relocation and Internment of Civilians 1997; Kahima 2003; Daniels 2004; Fugita and Fernandez 2004; Gordon and Okihiro 2006).

Scholars have tended to see these as separate landscapes. Certainly the barbed wire and guard towers that surrounded the camps reinforced this perspective. Yet they were not completely detached from their settings. Both were part of the federal landscape of the West. Since the nineteenth century, the federal government has often seen the West as a *tabula rasa* conducive to implementing state visions. The West posed fewer constraints than did other regions to large-scale initiatives such as irrigation projects, multipurpose hydroelectric dams, the testing of atomic weapons, and the incarceration of Japanese Americans.<sup>7</sup> This is so partly because so much of the land was (and is) in public ownership and perceived as free from social claims. Examining the landscapes of reclamation and incarceration together we can gain a better understanding of their shared evolution and the constellation of social power that brought them into being.

Scholars of the camps have not emphasized these connections either. Roger Daniels, one of the leading historians of incarceration, depicts the camp locations as “Godforsaken, places where nobody has lived before and where practically no one has lived since” (Daniels 1986, 114). Although the camps were indeed built in comparatively remote areas, they were not uninhabited

places. For the camps to function, the WRA needed access to railroads and highways to support the internees. The agency also expected the Japanese Americans to do “useful” work while they were interned, such as raising crops, which meant the camps needed irrigation water to support farms. Much of the lands surrounding the camps, these “desolate, faraway places” as Daniels also called them, were eagerly sought by veterans as homes and small family farms after the war. From the perspective of the Japanese American internees, and from the perspective of Asian American scholars, the camp locations did seem forbidding. Yet for white homesteaders, the arid Klamath Basin was a place of agrarian opportunity. With the help of the federal government, they sought to build a successful future.

In recent decades, scholars in geography and outside of it have examined the ways race is spatially constructed (Anderson 1991, 2008; Kobayashi and Peake 2000; Mitchell 2000; Delaney 2002; Kobayashi 2004; Schein 2002, 2006a, 2006b). As part of this larger project, these scholars and others have addressed the development of whiteness as a racial category (Bonnett 1997, 2000; Winders 2003; McCarthy and Hague 2004; Nelson 2008). Unlike other racial categories, whiteness is often seen as the norm and race as something that only applies to non-whites. Not only are white places constructed through the exclusion of those considered non-white, but they are considered places of privilege.<sup>8</sup>

Many of these studies examined how various levels of government facilitated the spatial separation of whites and other groups and in the process helped construct and reify racial categories (see earlier and Western 1996). The irrigated landscape in the Klamath Basin illustrates this process. Here, the U.S. federal government constructed the irrigation structures to make farming possible in the arid basin and established a procedure whereby homesteaders could apply for lands. Through explicit land regulations in Western states and unstated practice, non-whites could not apply.<sup>9</sup> Scholars have largely downplayed the role of federal land reclamation agencies in creating such racially homogenous landscapes.

The irrigated landscape, and other ones like it in the West, was an example of what Schein (1997) called *discourse materialized*. A pervasive discourse of agrarianism in the nineteenth century held that owner-occupied farms worked by hardy farmers were the highest and best use of public lands. The role of the federal government was to facilitate the transfer of the public domain into private hands. The Homestead Act of 1862

is the most famous incarnation of this discourse. The settlers moving onto such lands were a Western version of Thomas Jefferson’s yeoman farmers attempting to develop a landscape of agrarian opportunity in the desert. Congress hoped that the act would enable people of modest means to work the lands and contribute to the overall welfare and benefit of the nation (White 1991). Although the act allowed anyone who was over twenty-one and a head of a household to own land, proponents of the act saw Union soldiers as one of the greatest beneficiaries. “Their battle fields are on the prairies and the wilderness of your frontiers,” said Congressman Galusha A. Grow of Pennsylvania, “their achievements . . . smoothing the pathway of science and civilization” (quoted in Hibbard 1924, 384). Yet unlike in more temperate regions of the country, Western farming depended on irrigation. In the early to mid-twentieth century, the federal government played a pivotal role in designing and constructing irrigation projects. The U.S. Bureau of Reclamation built the reservoirs, canals, and other infrastructure necessary for irrigation to succeed. It also oversaw the distribution of homesteads to qualified applicants who hoped to cultivate land within the projects. The federal government became the instrument for making the homesteading dream a reality. In the process of creating an irrigated Eden, the government also created a landscape normalized as white.

## Landscapes of Promise

The Klamath Basin was not always an agricultural region.<sup>10</sup> For centuries, the basin was home to the Modoc and Klamath peoples, who depended on the seasonal resources in the basin’s rivers and lakes for survival. The southern part of the basin was Modoc territory, the heart of which was Tule Lake. They depended on a diverse set of resources, including plants such as camas and wocas, which they harvested along the lake’s margins. They also caught sucker fish and waterfowl, millions of which descended into the basin during the fall and spring migrations. Unlike the American settlers who arrived in the nineteenth century, the Modoc did not create landscapes that required sharp divisions between aquatic and terrestrial spaces. Rather, they depended on the productivity of the dynamic wetland environment for their survival (Isenberg 2005). Through the nineteenth century, however, the Modoc and their Klamath Indian neighbors to the north steadily lost control of the basin to encroaching white settlers. In

the early 1870s, the U.S. Army fought a protracted military campaign against the Modoc people that ended after a standoff in the lava beds at the southern end of Tule Lake (Murray 1959).

The removal of the Modoc was part of a process of enclosure and a key period in the development of a white settler landscape in the basin. From the perspective of Euro-American settlers, Modoc lands were underutilized and amenable to other uses such as grazing or irrigated agriculture (Isenberg 2005). The continued occupancy of lands in the southern basin by the Modoc was a threat to the emerging social and ecological order. The details of the war and Modoc removal are not my primary concern. Rather, this episode shows how the emergence of an irrigated landscape by white settlers involved dispossessing Indians, sequestering them on nearby reservations, or deporting them elsewhere.<sup>11</sup>

In the last decades of the nineteenth century, communities grew slowly in the Klamath Basin until the establishment of the Bureau of Reclamation Klamath Project in 1905. The Klamath Project was one of the first irrigation projects undertaken by the Reclamation Service (renamed the Bureau of Reclamation in 1923), an agency created in 1902 by the Newlands Reclamation Act. The agency was one of many formed during the Progressive Era to develop Western resources and bring them under rational management by trained experts. Supporters of the act believed only the federal government could continue to spread the agricultural frontier in the arid West. Using federal funds, the agency built the irrigation structures necessary to supply homesteads with needed water. The Reclamation Act stipulated that federal irrigation projects had to supply water to farms of 160 acres or fewer. Like farmers applying for land under the Homestead Act of 1862, settlers on federal irrigation project lands were expected to build homes on the property and to cultivate the land for five years to gain title. In addition, farmers paid the federal government a modest fee for water to cover the building costs of the irrigation projects (Worster 1985; Abbott 1994; Pisani 2002).

The Reclamation Service was a twentieth-century agency designed to create a nineteenth-century landscape.<sup>12</sup> Federal land policy in the nineteenth century enshrined these requirements in legislation such as the Homestead Act of 1862, which was designed to enable families to acquire small farms. Yet in the arid West, farms of such size were not practicable without irrigation water. The agency relied on professional engineers and modern technology to enable people of limited means to farm modest plots of land. The Reclamation

Service continued to encourage this sort of landscape even as rural people elsewhere in the United States left farms and remaining farmers consolidated lands into larger units of many hundreds of acres. Photographs from the time show the marvels of engineering such as new dams, diversion canals, and dikes. The photos are a celebration of the ability of technology to transform the landscape. Yet the technology was not an end in itself. New structures were designed to enable people to create prosperous family farms. Countless photos show the products of the farmers' hard work, such as homes and crops (Figures 4 and 5). In principle, the goal of the Bureau of Reclamation was not just delivering water to raise crops. Rather, the agency's ultimate goal was to create a particular type of agrarian landscape.

Homesteading was not open to everyone. Although not explicitly forbidden in the Reclamation Act, a number of state and federal laws made it difficult or impossible for non-whites to apply for project homesteads. In California, Chinese, Japanese, and other Asians were prohibited from owning land by the Alien Land Law of 1913 (Ng 1995; Mitchell 1996; Okihiro 2001). A similar law also prohibited Asians from owning land in Oregon. Elsewhere, the Reclamation Service undertook projects specifically for Indians on reservations. In this case, the Reclamation Service's plans were not to help white farmers but to aid larger federal efforts to assimilate Native peoples culturally (Pisani 2002). Except for these projects on Indian reservations, there is little evidence to suggest that non-whites homesteaded on Reclamation Service irrigation projects.

From the start, then, the Reclamation Service sought to create an irrigated landscape and also helped foster a deeply racialized landscape. Other parts of California, such as the Central Valley, the San Fernando Valley, and the Sacramento–San Joaquin delta region, saw the creation of Chinese, Japanese, and Indian Asian agricultural communities. These communities did not enter the Klamath Basin, however, because most of the agricultural land in the Klamath Basin was within the Reclamation Service's Klamath Project, and the service encouraged land ownership rather than leasing. Asian farmers were not able to enter the Klamath agricultural economy as tenants, as they did in other parts of California because outright ownership of land by Japanese nationals was illegal. The end result was an agricultural landscape composed almost exclusively of whites, although like their counterparts elsewhere in California and Oregon, Klamath Basin farmers came to depend increasingly on non-white labor,



**Figure 4.** Homesteaders on the Tule Lake section of the Klamath Project, 1916. Although this farm was not settled by veterans, most of the settlers in this section after 1920 were. (Courtesy: National Archives and Record Administration, College Park, MD)



**Figure 5.** Tule Lake homesteaders in grain field, 1916. (Courtesy: National Archives and Record Administration, College Park, MD)

particularly during World War II and the following decades.<sup>13</sup>

By the late 1930s, the Bureau of Reclamation and project homesteaders had nearly finished converting most of the marshes and lakes of the upper Klamath Basin into an agricultural landscape. In 1941, the Bureau of Reclamation planned to open unsettled land in the southeast section of the Tule Lake area to homesteaders. It had taken nearly four decades to complete the Klamath Project, and despite a number of serious setbacks, the Bureau of Reclamation had almost fulfilled its promise to reclaim the marshes that once cloaked the valleys and produced instead a landscape of small family farms. Yet the Bureau and basin residents would have their view of the reclamation lands challenged by the uprooting of Japanese Americans during the war.

## Landscapes of Betrayal

Within days after the Japanese military bombed Pearl Harbor on 7 December 1941, the FBI began rounding up Japanese Americans suspected of being enemy aliens and collaborators with Japan. During the coming month, newspapers and political leaders whipped up passions against Japanese Americans living in the West Coast states. Before month's end, General John L. DeWitt, head of the Western Defense Command and official responsible for leading the defense of the West Coast, first suggested removing enemy aliens to the U.S. interior. By mid-February, President Franklin Roosevelt signed Executive Order 9066, an act that gave the U.S. military the power to develop military areas from which the federal government could exclude certain groups. It also gave the military the authority to move these people to areas outside the exclusion zones and provide for their accommodation. Shortly afterward, the military designated the western halves of Washington, Oregon, California, and part of Arizona as exclusion areas. This set in motion the process that eventually led to the incarceration of 117,000 Japanese Americans in temporary assembly centers and, eventually, concentration camps (Daniels 2004).

The newly formed WRA was faced with the decision of where to build the camps. Certainly, some in the region's press had opinions on the matter. Newspaper columnist Henry McLemore thought the U.S. government should expel Japanese Americans to the "badlands" (quoted in Eisenhower 1974, 102). Indeed, newspapers at the time expressed a pervasive sentiment that the Japanese Americans were a menace that the

federal government should banish, preferably to some place remote and unpleasant. Because the government had little time to decide where to construct camps, it was essential that they be placed on federal lands or, at least, land that the federal government could acquire quickly and cheaply. As part of this objective, WRA chief Milton Eisenhower drew on the expertise of WRA staff, most of whom Eisenhower selected from the numerous federal agencies that had either been established or grown larger during the New Deal, such as the Bureau of Indian Affairs and the Department of Agriculture (Eisenhower 1974; J. S. Scott 2003). He called on leaders of the National Forest Service, Bureau of Reclamation, Public Land Office, and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) to develop maps of publicly owned lands, preferably on irrigation projects, that the WRA could use as sites for relocation centers. In this and many other actions, the WRA relied on the knowledge of other federal land management agencies to carry out its program, particularly in the West, where federal lands predominated. The preexisting federal landscape in the region became the base on which the WRA developed its incarceration program.

Bureau of Reclamation irrigation projects had a number of qualities that made them attractive to the WRA. Bureau projects were based away from the coasts where most Japanese Americans lived and they were outside the exclusion zones. Because unhomesteaded project land was federally owned, the WRA did not need to purchase land for the camps. Although isolated by some standards, federal reclamation projects were near railways or highways, which were essential to transport Japanese Americans to the camps and to supply them with provisions. Most important, however, the internees were expected to produce vegetables, grain, meat, and other agricultural products to help support thousands of others in the camps. The WRA believed that self-sufficiency was essential so that the camps did not become a drain on the war effort. The agency also wanted to keep the internees occupied with productive work. In the intermountain West, farming was largely impossible without irrigation water. Bureau of Reclamation projects offered the necessary infrastructure of canals and ditches to supply water to camp farms. Given that the WRA wanted to secure building sites as quickly as possible, it was no surprise that the agency chose the Reclamation Bureau's projects. They were relatively isolated, federally owned, and suitable for irrigation.<sup>14</sup>

Convincing the communities within the reclamation projects to accept the camps was a more difficult matter. When the residents in the Klamath Basin first

heard rumors that the federal government might build an incarceration camp in the area, they were mildly enthusiastic. Residents of the small town of Tule Lake met in February 1942 to discuss the possibility of an enemy alien camp nearby. Farmers realized that labor would be short during the growing season, and such a camp could supply needed workers. The residents were adamant, however, that the camp not hold Japanese Americans.<sup>15</sup> Some locals feared that interning Japanese Americans in the area would invite sabotage. They could “set grain on fire . . . [or pour] sand in trucks,” said one letter to the editor in the *Klamath News* “they [the Japanese Americans] should be wiped from the face of the earth” (“Oppose Jap Camp” 1942, 4). By April, however, it was clear that the WRA planned to build a camp for Japanese Americans nearby regardless of what basin residents wanted. In response, county and town governments passed a number of resolutions to express their hostility to the WRA’s plans. The Klamath County Chamber of Commerce listed a number of safety objections to interning Japanese Americans nearby. The proximity of the Klamath Basin and the presence of major highways meant that internees could escape and putatively aid Japanese military activities in coastal areas. The chamber of commerce also feared that the internees could sabotage the Klamath Project and create havoc in the basin. Such comments suggest that basin leaders already saw Japanese Americans as a foreign and potentially subversive group. Town residents in the southern part of the basin, however, were frank in their opposition. One group wrote that “the Tule Lake area was settled and developed by Caucasians and that it would be obviously unfair to deprive them of rich farm land in favor of the Japanese.” In another measure, the Tulelake Chamber of Commerce insisted that there are no “orientals or negroes” here, and they intended to preserve the makeup of the area. However, if the Japanese were only brought in as temporary workers to aid in the harvest, farmers in the Tule Lake area would not oppose them. Under no circumstances, the representatives stated, should the Japanese internees stay after the war (“Army Mulling Tule Lake Jap Camp Program” 1942; “Chamber of Commerce Unit Opposed to Establishment of Jap Camp at Tule Lake” 1942; “Jap Camp Objection List Ordered Sunday in South End; Resolutions Planned” 1942; “Tulelake Chamber Opposes Japanese Evacuation Camp” 1942).<sup>16</sup>

The editors of the *Klamath News*, the newspaper with the largest circulation in the basin, realized there was little that residents could do to prevent the WRA from

building the camp. They urged area residents to redirect their efforts and insist

with all of their strength that the authorities commit themselves NOW to the removal of Japanese from this district when the emergency is over. This country has been developed by white citizens, many of them native-born. These people have a right to demand that the government abstain from a policy which will change the character of the population of this territory. (“Editorial: Weekend Roundup” 1942, 4)

The editorial staff of the *Klamath News* expressed an attitude common among leaders in the West. In early April 1942, the WRA met with Western governors in Salt Lake City to discuss options for evacuating Japanese to intermountain states. WRA chief Milton Eisenhower hoped to move the evacuees on to subsistence homesteads spread throughout the region. If Japanese came into the state and bought land, warned Nels Smith, the governor of Wyoming, “There will be Japs hanging from every pine tree.” He insisted that the Japanese needed to be worked under guard in concentration camps. If the government could bring them to the state, it needed to remove them after the war. Bret Miller, the attorney general of Idaho, added, “We want to keep this white man’s country” (War Relocation Center, San Francisco Office, “Report on Meeting, April 7, at Salt Lake City, with Governors, Attorneys General, and other State and Federal Officials of 10 Western States,” 8 April 1942, 20–21 in Daniels [1989]. See also “Statement by M. S. Eisenhower, Director of the War Relocation Authority, April 7, 1942,” Relocation of Japanese—Salt Lake City Meeting, April 7, 1942, Headquarters Basic Documentation: General, 1941–1946, Entry 2 [Records of the War Relocation Authority].)

Such comments clearly show how Western leaders assumed that the intermountain West was a white landscape and that they expected the federal government to actively maintain the racial mix of the countryside. Of course, Chinese, Japanese, and other Asian immigrants had long been in the West. Numerous legal rules and social customs, however, restricted Asians to neighborhoods in these communities. The arrival of thousands of Japanese Americans threatened the assumptions of many whites about the Western United States.

Contempt for the Japanese did not prevent efforts by farmers and federal agencies in the Klamath Basin from seeking to employ them as laborers. Basin farmers sought unsuccessfully to use internees on local farms (the WRA did allow a few dozen internees to harvest sugar beets in the Malheur Valley, an agricultural area

in eastern Oregon; see “Malheur Farmers Ask Jap Evacuees” 1942; “White House Okays Plan to Recruit Japs for Malheur” 1942). Similarly, the U.S. FWS attempted to use internees to complete restoration projects on the Tule Lake Refuge left unfinished by the recently disbanded Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC), which had operated a work camp in the Klamath Basin during the 1930s.<sup>17</sup> (Indeed, men from the CCC were able to use the building skills they acquired while in the corps. When the CCC camp closed, most of the remaining members found employment constructing the incarceration camp.) From the perspective of the farmers and refuge managers, wartime labor shortages made the Tule Lake War Relocation Center an attractive source for needed workers. This dual construction of Japanese internees as vital workers and subversive, untrustworthy aliens by local whites and FWS personnel endured throughout the war. Later that year, as internees began to harvest crops from the relocation center’s farm, which was located on the Tule Lake Refuge, FWS officials worried about the fate of the migrating waterfowl feeding nearby. J. Clark Salyer II, the chief of wildlife refuges for the FWS, believed that the WRA could not protect internee crops and that the birds would devour many of the planted grains. He likened the Tule Lake Refuge to a group of American soldiers held captive by the Japanese and claimed that the WRA had little control over the workers. Furthermore, he accused the Japanese of harassing waterfowl and of leaving potatoes and lettuce to rot in the fields while boxcars of food were delivered to the Tule Lake camp.<sup>18</sup>

To the residents of the Klamath Basin, the camp was an intrusion into their community made in the name of national security. They could accept the camp but not the Japanese Americans. Standing on a cliff above it one evening in the summer of 1944, a writer for the Klamath Falls *Herald and News* looked down on the camp and believed he saw its meaning: “One is not only impressed by the immensity of the place, but soon finds himself deep in speculation over its strangeness, its mystery, and the vast complexity of the problems it represents.” For the writer, the camp was a product of Pearl Harbor. It represented an attempt by “a humanitarian government to do the right thing” (1944, 4). The camp was not a blight on the landscape or a mark of shame. Instead, it was seen as an honorable response to the treachery of the Japanese attack on 7 December 1941 and the barbarity of the Bataan Death March. These acts justified the landscape he saw before him.

The landscape did not teach the camp internees the same lesson. In their minds, the camp was a stinging

symbol of the government’s betrayal, not an act of compassion. Their experience there and at other WRA camps left them bitter. For many, a government that was willing to do this to its people did not deserve their allegiance. When the camps around the country closed in 1945 and 1946, 4,724 Japanese renounced their citizenship and went to Japan rather than stay in the United States. Most came from the Tule Lake camp, which the WRA designated a segregation center in 1943 for internees considered disloyal by the government. Violet de Cristoforo was one of them. After returning to Japan, she took a train to find her mother in her hometown of Hiroshima. The atomic bomb had obliterated the train station and the family home. She found her mother days later, her face badly burned and her hair gone due to radiation sickness. Violet had traveled from the deserts of northern California to the ruins of Hiroshima. The two landscapes were separated by an ocean, but both were products of American policies during the war. Violet de Cristoforo experienced two landscapes produced by this conflict, what the historian John Dower aptly called a racial “war without mercy” (Tateishi 1984; Dower 1986).

## Erasing the Past

As quickly as they came, the Japanese American internees disappeared. The camp built by the WRA on a drained marsh that had once housed more than 18,000 people lay vacant. What to do with such a place? Although the war had just ended a few months earlier, life in the basin went on. Farmers prepared fields for planting. Within weeks of the Japanese American departure, Latino farm workers moved into some of the empty barracks. Other government agencies scavenged leftover equipment from the camp. The U.S. FWS commandeered searchlights from the guard towers. Refuge managers found them to be an effective way of scaring waterfowl who feasted at night on fields of wheat and barley. At least for a time, the searchlights proved a reasonable deterrent (Wilson 2010).

The Bureau of Reclamation had unfinished business with the land immediately to the north of the camp. The agency had intended to distribute it to homesteaders in the early 1940s, but the war had forced the agency to delay its plans. With the conflict over, the agency hoped to open the area to settlers—the last piece of the Klamath Project made available to homesteaders. As with other land in the Tule Lake section of the project, this would go to military veterans. World War I veterans

had claimed many of the parcels in the northern part of the Tule Lake section of the project. Now the end of the war allowed the Bureau of Reclamation to distribute the last remaining land in the Klamath Project to veterans of the most recent conflict (Thye 1947; Turner 2002).

Every step of the way, from sorting the applications to the establishment of homesteads, Bureau of Reclamation photographers documented the process. As it always had, the agency was eager not only to show smiling would-be farmers with their families but also to illustrate the sort of landscape it created. Within hours of the drawing, the agency's photographers took some of the homestead winners to the top of The Peninsula to overlook the land that would soon belong to them.<sup>19</sup> This is where Mr. and Mrs. Metz were photographed (Figure 1). Other photographs show much the same thing. In some, the winners hold maps of the area, matching their plots on paper with the landscape they see before them. Yet one photograph shows the contrast between the Bureau of Reclamation's landscape of opportunity and the landscape of incarceration (Figure 6). Here, Mr. and Mrs. Phillip Krizo stand with their child on The Peninsula looking into the distance. In the background of the photo is the grid of fields that would soon belong to the homesteaders. Also in the right half of the image is the grid of barracks, barbed

wire fences, and guard towers of the incarceration camp (Cassmore 1947a).

While they waited to claim their land, the new homesteaders lived in the abandoned barracks at the Tule Lake War Relocation Center. It was there in May 1947 that a Bureau of Reclamation photographer took what became the iconic image from the land opening (Figure 7). It shows Eleanor Bolesta, a former Navy Women Accepted for Volunteer Emergency Service (WAVE) during the war and the first woman homestead winner in the history of the Bureau of Reclamation, sitting proudly atop a tractor with a look of determination. When she won her homestead, Bolesta was working in Seattle and caring for her husband, a former Marine wounded fighting the Japanese on Guam.<sup>20</sup>

In creating their homesteads, the new settlers participated in the erasure of the camp. To help them get started, the Bureau of Reclamation offered each homesteader two barracks for \$100 and the cost of transporting the buildings to their property, a gift most settlers accepted. In the summer of 1947, trucks moved barrack sections to their new locations. As they worked their land, homesteaders lived in tents and shacks as they renovated the barracks into homes. To aid them in doing so, the Bureau of Reclamation offered the settlers plans that suggested possible styles, some of which



**Figure 6.** Homestead winner Phillip Krizo with his family on The Peninsula overlooking the eastern part of the Tule Lakebed, 1946. Note the remains of the incarceration camp on the right side of the image. (Courtesy: U.S. Bureau of Reclamation, Klamath Project Headquarters)



**Figure 7.** Eleanor Bolesta, 1946 homestead winner, on the cover of *The Reclamation Era*, a nationally distributed magazine produced by the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation. Although all the other homestead winners were male military veterans, Bolesta was deemed eligible for the homestead drawing because she had served in the Navy WAVEs during the war, and her husband was a former Marine wounded on Guam. Note the Tule Lake incarceration camp barracks in the background. (Courtesy: Syracuse University Library)

were published in the agency's national publication, *The Reclamation Era* (Figure 8). Because many of the homestead wives came from cities, *The Reclamation Era* author urged homesteaders to turn the barracks into attractive homes "so that they [settlers' wives] will learn to adopt the farm mode of living, and be happy to stay on the homesteads and help build a new community" (Thye

1947, 104). Within a few months, settlers converted the barracks into semblances of farm houses (Figure 9).

Yet traces of the former occupants endured inside the new homes. One photo shows Frank Sullivan returning from a day on his spread to his unkempt home (Sullivan, the caption informs us, was a bachelor). Next to the doorway are regulations printed in both English

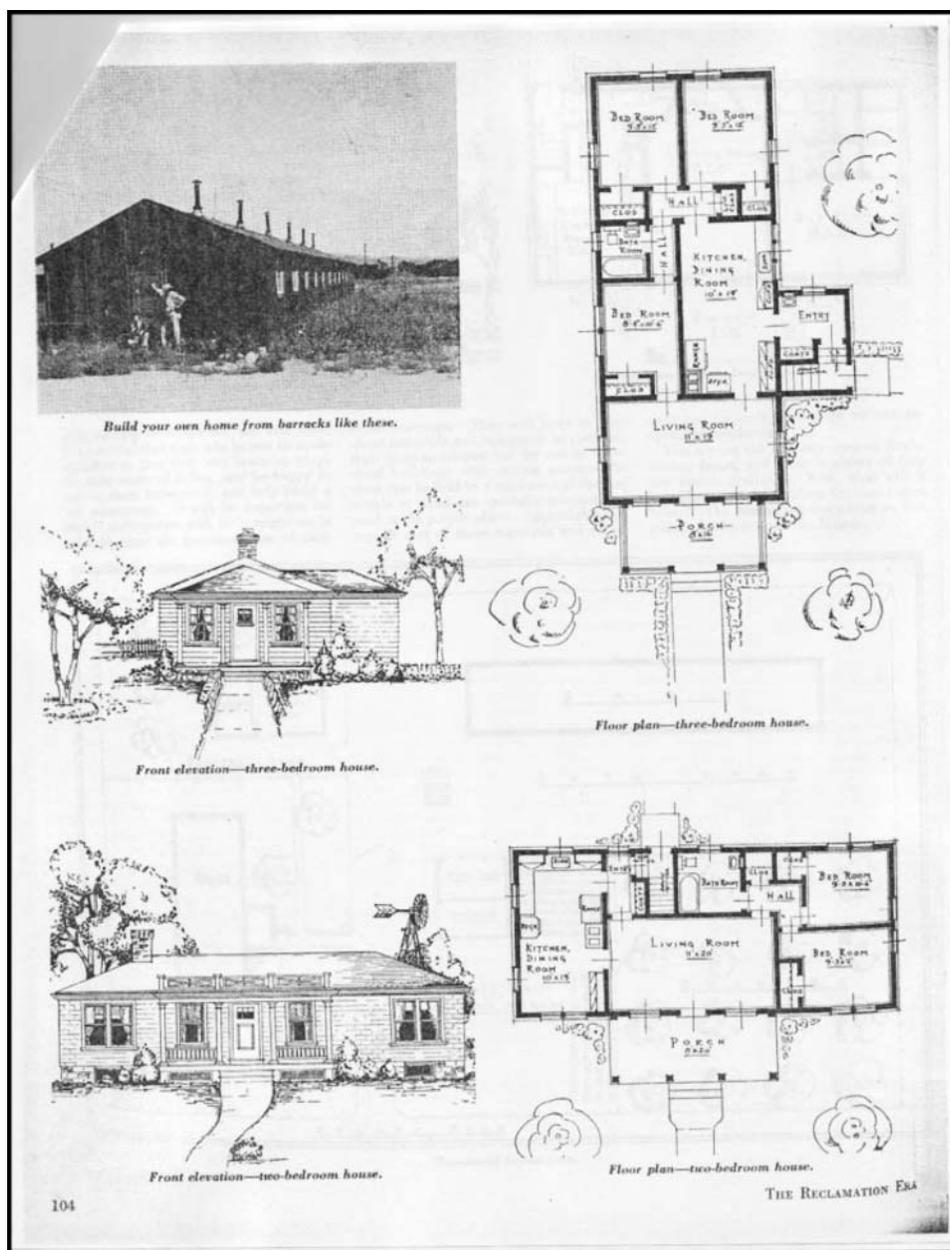


Figure 8. Plans for converting barracks into homesteads (Thye 1947).

and Japanese listing the rules and regulations for the barracks (Figure 10). In another photo, we see Mrs. John Irving sitting quietly in her tidy kitchen reading a magazine by a picture window (Figure 11). Outside is her family's farm, and in the distance is The Peninsula, the bluff overlooking the Tule Lake concentration camp and the place where the would-be homesteaders had first sighted the land that would soon be theirs. It is a scene of domestic tranquility. Behind Mrs. Irving, however, is the unfinished wall with writing from the former Japanese occupants of what has become her

home. No doubt, after a few more years the writing disappeared from Mrs. Irving's wall. From what the photo shows, she was a good homemaker and would likely have painted over the writing or covered it with wallpaper. At the Tule Lake Relocation Center, the erasure of the camp remnants continued. Winners of homestead drawings in 1947 and 1949 carted off some of the remaining barracks. Slowly, most of the Tule Lake camp disappeared.<sup>21</sup>

At first glance, these actions might seem like an example of whitewashing—a deliberate attempt to



Figure 9. Renovated camp barrack on new homestead, 1947. (Courtesy: U.S. Bureau of Reclamation, Klamath Project Headquarters)

conceal the basin's unpleasant past. Yet such an interpretation implies that basin residents, new homesteaders, and the Bureau of Reclamation felt a sense of shame about incarcerating Japanese Americans. There is little evidence that they did. The abundant photographs of the land opening in the press showing homesteaders converting barracks into homes suggest that locals

had few qualms. Indeed, there was widespread agreement among white Americans that incarceration was an unfortunate but necessary exercise (Daniels 2004). It seemed to them only just that the U.S. government would reward veterans not only with free land, a common practice after previous conflicts, but also the materials to build their own homes. The new occupants



Figure 10. Homesteader Frank Sullivan in his new home. Note the writing in Japanese beside the door. (Courtesy: U.S. Bureau of Reclamation, Klamath Project Headquarters)



**Figure 11.** Mrs. John A. Irving, the wife of one of the homestead winners, reading a magazine in her home, a modified barrack from the incarceration camp. Note the writing in Japanese on the wall behind her, 1947. (Courtesy: U.S. Bureau of Reclamation, Klamath Project Headquarters).

might not have known that some of the Japanese Americans who once lived in them were likely also farmers who owned homes elsewhere along the West Coast before incarceration. The internees lost their houses but sought to create semblances of normalcy by making these crude barracks into homes. The barracks, then, found second lives as homes for the white settlers.

By interpreting photographs in this way, there is perhaps a risk of fetishizing landscape. The intentions of the settlers themselves cannot be captured, and written evidence of racialized exclusion comes from the war years. The fate of Japanese Americans is written in their absence. Yet taken as a whole, such images show how the everyday actions of homesteaders and the official actions of the federal government reflected an ideology that excluded Japanese Americans from the basin. During the war, as the newspaper articles show, many locals saw the presence of Japanese Americans as an aberration. After the war, and with the assistance of the Bureau of Reclamation, they sought to perpet-

uate the landscape of promise by filling the landscape with citizens who embodied both the ideal of whiteness and the norm of agricultural transformation. These images also show that developing a racialized landscape happens not only when consecrating public markers on the land, such as with monuments, nor only through the explicit exclusion of racialized others, but through the collective action of settlers and the enforcement of federal policy that reflect an assumption of whiteness, and a normalized imposition of that assumption on the landscape.

## Coda

Driving on Highway 139 to Klamath Falls, it is easy to miss the site of the Tule Lake War Relocation Center. Many of the buildings are gone. No visitor center marks the camp that stood there or memorializes the 18,000 Japanese that once lived behind the wires. The hamlet of Newell has grown on the site of the former camp. The mostly Latino residents are a source of labor for the farms within the Klamath Project. The project was based on a vision of hardy farmers working their own land, yet like most farms in the West, migrant seasonal laborers labor in the fields. Some of the remaining barracks are still used to house Klamath Project farm workers. In this way, Newell is a very ordinary place in rural California: a town of dark-skinned migrant laborers toiling in the fields (Mitchell 1996; Turner 2002).

To the untrained eye, there is little evidence that the incarceration camp ever existed. There is one roadside sign marking the site. Constructed by the Japanese American Citizens League near Newell in 1979, it reads

Tule Lake was one of ten concentration camps established during World War II to incarcerate 110,000 persons of Japanese ancestry, of whom the majority were American citizens, behind barbed wires and guard towers without charge, trial, or establishment of guilt. These camps are reminders of how racism, economic and political exploitation, and expediency can undermine the constitutional guarantees of United States Citizens and aliens alike. May the injustices and humiliation suffered here never recur.<sup>22</sup>

Although this is a powerful marker, it is hardly sufficient given the severity and importance of what occurred there. The failure to mark this site in a more elaborate fashion shows that it holds unresolved meaning for basin residents and the nation as a whole (Foote 2003). In a region that still celebrates the pioneering spirit of early homesteaders, memorializing the camp would also raise uncomfortable issues about the use of

buildings after the war and the legacy of racism marked on the landscape.<sup>23</sup>

This humble marker, and the lack of a more elaborate and visible memorial, raises questions about what parts of our collective past are considered worth remembering. Schein (2003) argued that racialized landscapes are “places where American ideas about race take tangible, visible form, and where those forms and ideas not only speak about some collective American past, but also serve as cultural signposts toward our collective future” (200). The Tule Lake Relocation Center certainly qualifies as a place where American ideas about race were materialized in the landscape. Through conscious actions the federal government and homesteaders after the war obliterated much of the physical legacy of the camp. The discourse valorized is one of hardy pioneers carving out productive farms in an unforgiving land. The ability of the government and locals not only to remove much of the material legacy of the camps but to utilize its physical remnants to perpetuate the agrarian landscape of promise points to the power of this discourse.

Yet by the early twenty-first century, this place of opportunity that had once attracted so many homesteaders to the Klamath Basin had turned sour. Homesteaders and their descendants learned that the federal government, which had facilitated their hopes of owning and maintaining family farms, could also undermine their livelihoods. In 2001, the Klamath Basin was plagued by a severe drought that left snowpack in the surrounding mountains just a fraction of normal. This was a problem for farmers within the Klamath Project, but it was potentially lethal to three species of threatened and endangered fish (coho salmon, Lost River suckers, and shortnose suckers) living within the basin’s rivers and lakes. Using the authority of the Endangered Species Act, the U.S. FWS and the National Marine Fisheries Service called on the Bureau of Reclamation to stop delivering water via its irrigation channels to project farmers—an unprecedented action. The decision riled basin residents. To protest, hundreds of farmers and thousands of their supporters marched in the streets of Klamath Falls. A “bucket brigade” carried pails of water from the Upper Klamath Lake Reservoir and dumped them into the dry main canal of the Klamath Project. On 4 July 2001 (Independence Day), farmers illegally broke open the canal headgates in acts of civil disobedience (Brazil 2001; Most 2006).

For the basin’s homesteaders, the landscape of promise had become one of betrayal. Eleanor Bolesta, the homesteader in 1947 pictured on the cover of *The*

*Reclamation Era* looking determined and hopeful, felt angry and deceived. Now in her late seventies, Bolesta studied the deed the federal government gave her and other homesteaders in 1947 promising them project water forever. “Even if we get our water back, things will never be as they were,” she said. “Even the good relationships between neighbors have been harmed past reconciliation. I have been betrayed by those I trusted. I am angry” (Kunkel and Juillerat 2002, 147). Given the frustration that she and other the basin farmers shared, they were in no mood to reflect on the other ways the federal government had helped construct the irrigated landscape. Doing so had meant defeating the Modoc and Klamath Indians and later terminating their reservation. It meant draining the marshes and lakes that had once cloaked the basins and nourished millions of migratory birds (Wilson 2002, 2010). It also meant preventing non-whites from homesteading land. Paul Christy, a 1947 homesteader who had enlisted shortly after Pearl Harbor and still lived in a renovated incarceration camp barrack, said “Sixty years ago, I was behind Rommel’s lines in North Africa. Today, I’m still fighting, although this time, it’s against my own government” (Hurst 2002, 28).

White farmers believed they were different from the Indians or the Japanese Americans interned at Tule Lake. They saw themselves as true Americans who had served their country honorably in war. They had fought the Japanese, among others, to protect the nation. This plain-folks Americanism proved a powerful ideological weapon that farmers used to great effect during their protests against the government’s environmental rulings (Gregory 1989). On a deeper level, their sense of betrayal illustrates the disillusionment they experienced from the loss of entitlement and privilege. This feeling of entitlement came from the labor they had spent on their farms and from the fact they were descendants of veterans or veterans themselves. What remained unsaid, however, was that they felt the government owed them this privilege because they were white.

This history raises important questions about who were the beneficiaries of federal land transformations in the West and who were granted rights as citizens. Popular and scholarly accounts often depict World War II as a “good war.” In the aftermath of the conflict, the federal government expressed its thanks through programs to benefit veterans such as the GI Bill (Mettler 2005). As it had done after previous conflicts, it also gave veterans preferential access to farm land. The ironies that result in the Klamath Basin are particularly striking: White homesteaders were given dwellings that during

the war housed Japanese Americans, many of whom had lost farms elsewhere when the WRA relocated and incarcerated them. The beneficiaries of a grateful nation were sharply limited. Such uneven appreciation was etched in the Klamath Basin's racialized landscape.

The historical geography of the Klamath Basin also shows how Japanese American incarceration was an environmental project and homesteading was a racial one in which whites were the privileged recipients. Both were also national projects. Homesteading was part of nation building in the most literal sense: carving out settlements on land recently acquired from Native Americans. Yet homesteading was only partly about putting settlers on the land; it was also about putting *white* people on the land. The incarceration of Japanese Americans during World War II came from a discourse about protecting the nation, although such protection was not from any material threat to national security as much as from a threat to maintaining whiteness as the American norm. In the name of national security, the federal government evacuated and sequestered internees within concentration camps. After the war, the government fulfilled its promise to basin residents and removed the Japanese Americans. With their departure, federal agencies and local residents obliterated much of this non-white space and returned to constructing a white agrarian landscape as they had before the war.<sup>24</sup>

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## Notes

1. Of course, all landscapes are racialized. I used it here in the sense stated by Richard Schein (2003), who defined racialized landscapes as "American cultural landscapes that are particularly implicated in racist practice and the perpetuation of (or challenge to) racist social relations" (203). I contend that Japanese American internment camps, and the white federal irrigation communities in which many were situated, fit this criterion.

2. The U.S. federal government also built relocation centers on Indian reservations, lands controlled by the Farm Security Administration, various other lands in the public domain, farms acquired due to owners delinquent in paying taxes, and lands it purchased outright (Burton et al. 2002).
3. This article is part of a larger project on Japanese American incarceration that also examines how the WRA selected the camp locations, the geographies of internee resistance, and informal and formal efforts to memorialize the incarceration sites.
4. An exception is the recently published volume on twentieth-century homesteading in the Western United States by Cannon (2009). He does not explicitly address the racial dimensions of constructing these landscapes.
5. Given the renewed interest in race and landscape, this lack of attention to internment is notable. Some geographers have studied internment from other perspectives. Karl Lillquist recently completed a Web book on the different internment camps as an education resource for teachers in the state of Washington (Lillquist 2007). Foote (2003) briefly discussed some of the internment camps in his book on memorialization.
6. Although for a recent article that examines race, landscape, and whites in the rural American West, see Lawson, Jarosz, and Bonds (2010).
7. J. C. Scott (1998) examined the connection between the state and high modernism.
8. Although not always. In her analysis of travel writing in the postbellum South, Winders (2003) discussed how whiteness was not necessarily synonymous with privilege.
9. Whiteness is, of course, a pliable category. Until late in the nineteenth century, for instance, Irish immigrants were not considered to be white (Ignatiev 1995). In the Klamath Basin, white Anglo-Saxons were not the only ones who built homesteads. Malin, Oregon, a farming community within the Klamath Project, was settled almost entirely by Czechoslovakian immigrants in 1909 (Turner 2002). Although to native-born Americans such immigrants might not have been considered white, the Reclamation Service did not prohibit them from acquiring land in the Klamath Basin either.
10. The phrase "landscapes of promise" is taken from the title of William Robbins's environmental history of Oregon (Robbins 1997).
11. In the years prior to the Modoc War, the federal government attempted to confine the Modoc on the Klamath Reservation, which they shared with the Klamath people. The Modoc refused to stay there and traveled back to their lands around Tule Lake, an action that helped spark the conflict. After the war, the supposed Modoc instigators and leaders were executed and the remaining people were sent to a reservation in what became Oklahoma (at that time, Indian Territory). In the early twentieth century, some Modocs returned to live on the Klamath Reservation (Isenberg 2005; Most 2006).
12. Pisani (2002, xi–xiii) argued that although the Reclamation Service used advanced engineering on its projects, it did so to create farms and homesteads more in line with what was promoted by nineteenth-century federal land policy.

13. The Newlands Reclamation Act does not mention racial or ethnic restrictions for homesteaders. However, the act did prohibit the use of "Mongolian labor" (i.e., Chinese, Japanese, or Asian Indian labor) in reclamation project construction.
14. Why these projects were chosen over the dozens of other Bureau of Reclamation projects is unclear.
15. Presumably, the farmers assumed that Italian or German aliens would be housed in the camp ("Enemy Alien Farm Camp Sought" 1942; see also "Alien Camp Set-Up Change Announced" 1942; "Wants Alien Camp" 1942).
16. Government reports from the time stated that the population of Klamath County and the Tule Lake section of the Klamath Basin was almost exclusively white. Klamath and Modoc Indians lived in the area, although mostly on the Klamath Reservation in the northern most part of the basin. The only other non-whites living in the basin were twenty-two African Americans. (Some migrant Latino farm workers came to the area during harvest seasons, although significant numbers would not work in the basin until after the establishment of the Bracero Program in 1942.) No one of Japanese descent lived in the basin in 1940. See "Memo to Mr. Bates," 26 April 1942 (Records of the War Relocation Authority).
17. See the following correspondence: Leo Laythe, Regional Director to Director, Fish and Wildlife Service, 29 May 1942; Paul T. Kreager, Regional Refuge Supervisor to Director, Fish and Wildlife Service, 5 June 1942; C. G. Fairchild, Refuge Manager to Leo L. Laythe, Regional Director, 23 June 1942; Leo L. Laythe, Regional Director to Director, FWS to C.G. Fairchild, 27 June 1942; A. C. Elmer, Assistant Chief, Division of Wildlife Refuges to Leo L. Laythe, Regional Director, 13 July 1942, FF13, Box 11 (J. Clark Salyer Papers).
18. See the following correspondence: J. Clark Salyer II to Mr. Day, Mr. Chaney, and Mr. Gardner, Memorandum, 23 October 1942; Dillion to Leo Laythe, Telegram, 13 November 1942; and J. Clark Salyer II to Dr. Gabrielson, Memorandum, 26 January 1943, "Tule Lake, 1934–1944" (Bureau of Biological Survey General Correspondence, 1890–1956).
19. Each photo from this series has lengthy captions that note the name of the homesteaders and the date on which it was taken. Except for the photograph of homesteader Eleanor Bolesta, all photos were scanned by the author at the Klamath Project headquarters, Klamath Falls, Oregon.
20. Barracks are visible in the background of the photograph, an indication that the photo was taken on the grounds of the Tule Lake camp. If so, the tractor she sits on was likely used by the Japanese internees on the WRA farm.
21. For further accounts of the homestead opening for veterans, both in the Klamath Basin and on other reclamation projects, see Branam (1947), Cassmore (1947a), Palmer (1947), and Cannon (2009).
22. Transcribed by the author.
23. A more formal process of memorialization might occur in the future. In 2006, the federal government allotted \$38 million to support research and restoration of the camp sites (Associated Press 2006).

24. I am indebted to Jamie Winders for helping me see these connections.

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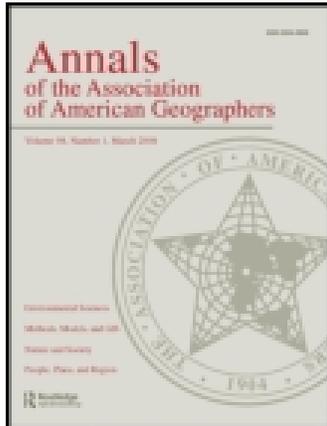
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### Landscapes of Promise and Betrayal: Reclamation, Homesteading, and Japanese American Incarceration

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